

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 129

20p

CHARIOTS
OF FEAR



STARBLAZER




BY 2000 AD, TENTATIVE STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN TO SET UP SPACE COLONIES, BUT IT WAS IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL BOOM OF 2050 THAT CITIES WERE FINALLY ESTABLISHED. MANNED DEEP SPACE FLIGHT WAS STILL VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN, AND NO INDICATION OF ANY OTHER LIFEFORMS HAD EVER BEEN FOUND. ON AN EARTH SPACE CITY, THREE MEN WERE NOT FAR AWAY FROM A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH THE —



IT WAS SEPTEMBER 30, 2070 AND LIFE ON THE
LARGEST OF EARTH'S SPACE CITY ORBITERS,
MAGNUS III, WENT ON AS USUAL.

OPENING OUTER HATCH. REPAIR TEAM TO
SHUTTLE LAUNCH BAY 4, PLEASE...

THE REPAIR TEAM, HEADED BY JIM McDONAGH, REACHED BAY 4 —



CHIEF ENGINEER TOD MORGAN AND
PROFESSOR MOWBRAY, YOUR
EQUIPMENT'S ALREADY ABOARD,
GENTLEMEN.

SECONDS LATER THE CRAFT SLID OUT —



RUPTURE IS
IN YELLOW SECTOR.

THE DAMAGE HAS EXPOSED ELECTRONIC
CIRCUITS, JIM. THEY COULD BURN OUT ...



PROFESSOR MOWBRAY WAS THE CRAFT'S TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, AND NONE TOO PATIENT.

AT THAT MOMENT IN MAGNUS III'S RADAR CENTRE ...

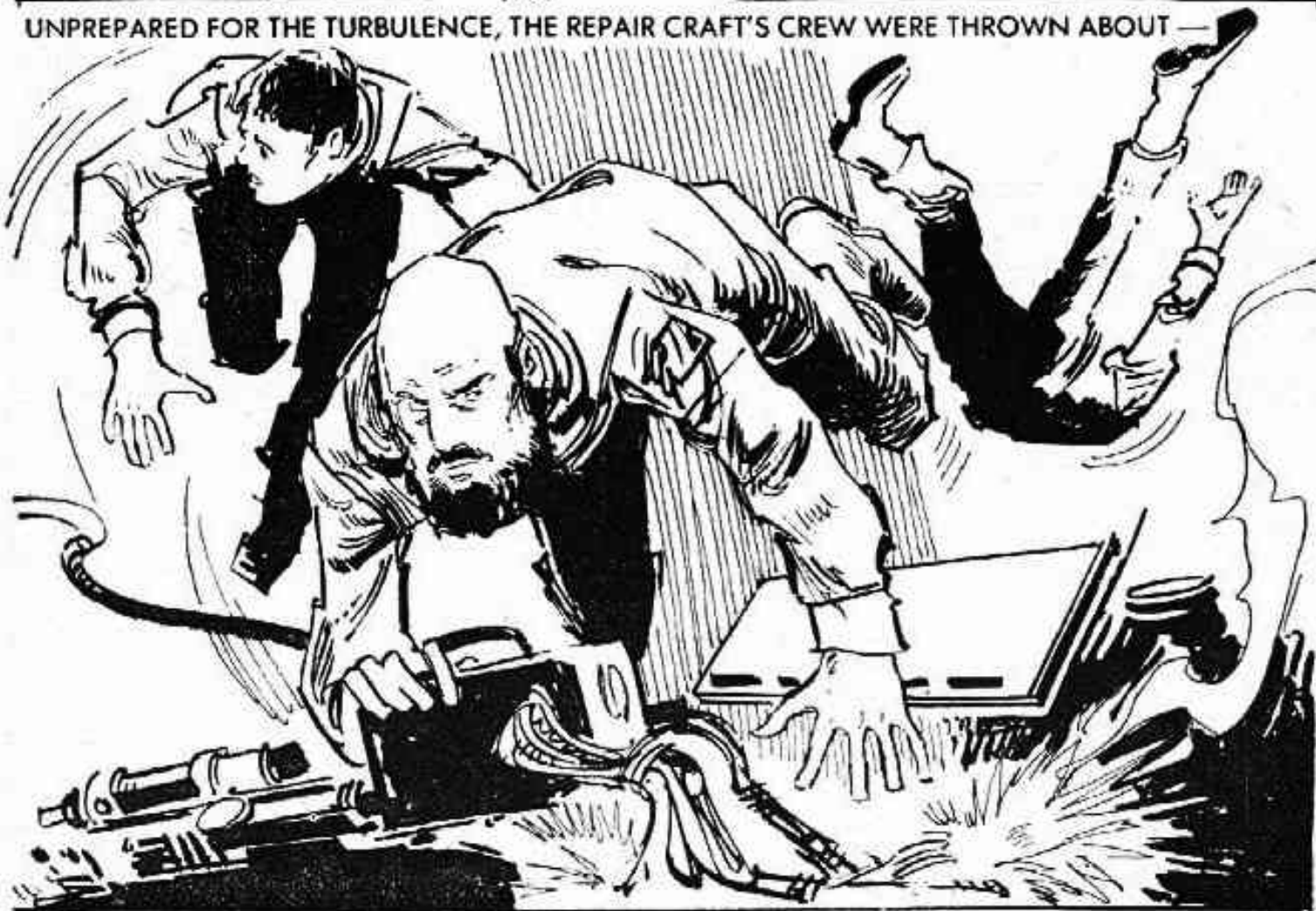


NEXT MOMENT ...


WE'RE TOO LATE!

WHAT...? HANG ON...!

UNPREPARED FOR THE TURBULENCE, THE REPAIR CRAFT'S CREW WERE THROWN ABOUT —




A CLOSE WATCH WAS BEING KEPT ON THE SCANNERS OF MAGNUS III —



WE'VE SCANNED ALL SECTIONS.
THERE'S NOT A SIGN OF THE SHUTTLE CRAFT.

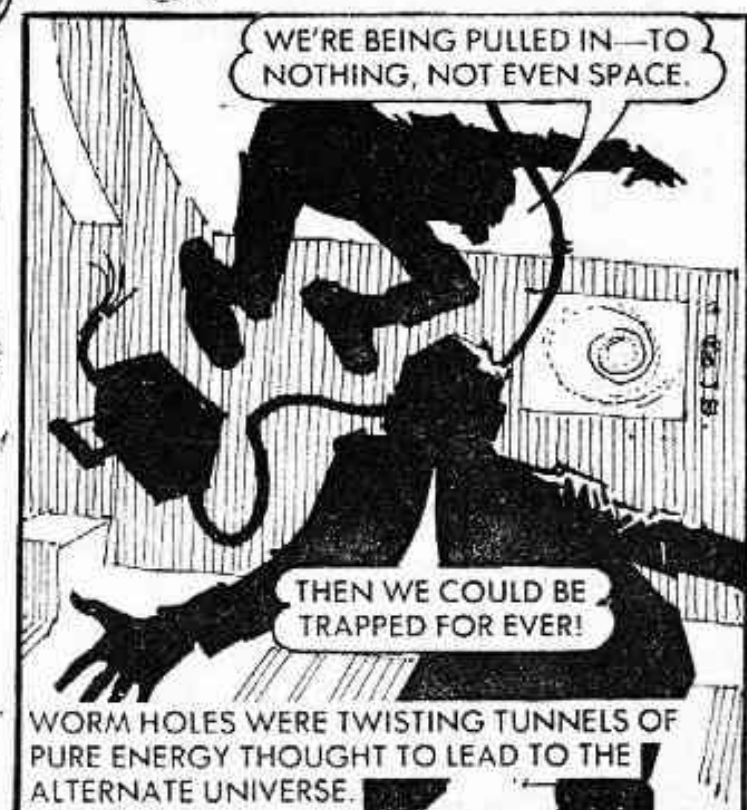
IT MUST'VE DISINTEGRATED. POOR
DEVILS! THEY DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE ...

BUT ...



WE'RE STILL IN ONE PIECE.
IT'S A MIRACLE!

WE WERE JUST SWEEPED UP AND TOSSED
CLEAR, LIKE PAPER IN THE WIND, JIM.



UNCONSCIOUSNESS GRIPPED THEM ALL, AND THE NEXT FEW UNITS WERE BLACKED OUT —

THE COMPUTER PILOT'S RESPONDING AGAIN. POWER'S FAILING FAST ...

SO WE'RE CLEAR OF THE HOLE, BUT WHERE ARE WE?

YOU MEAN, WE'RE LOST IN DEEP SPACE?

RADIO AND ASTRAL NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT'S FAILED. HEY, THERE'S A PLANET DEAD AHEAD ...

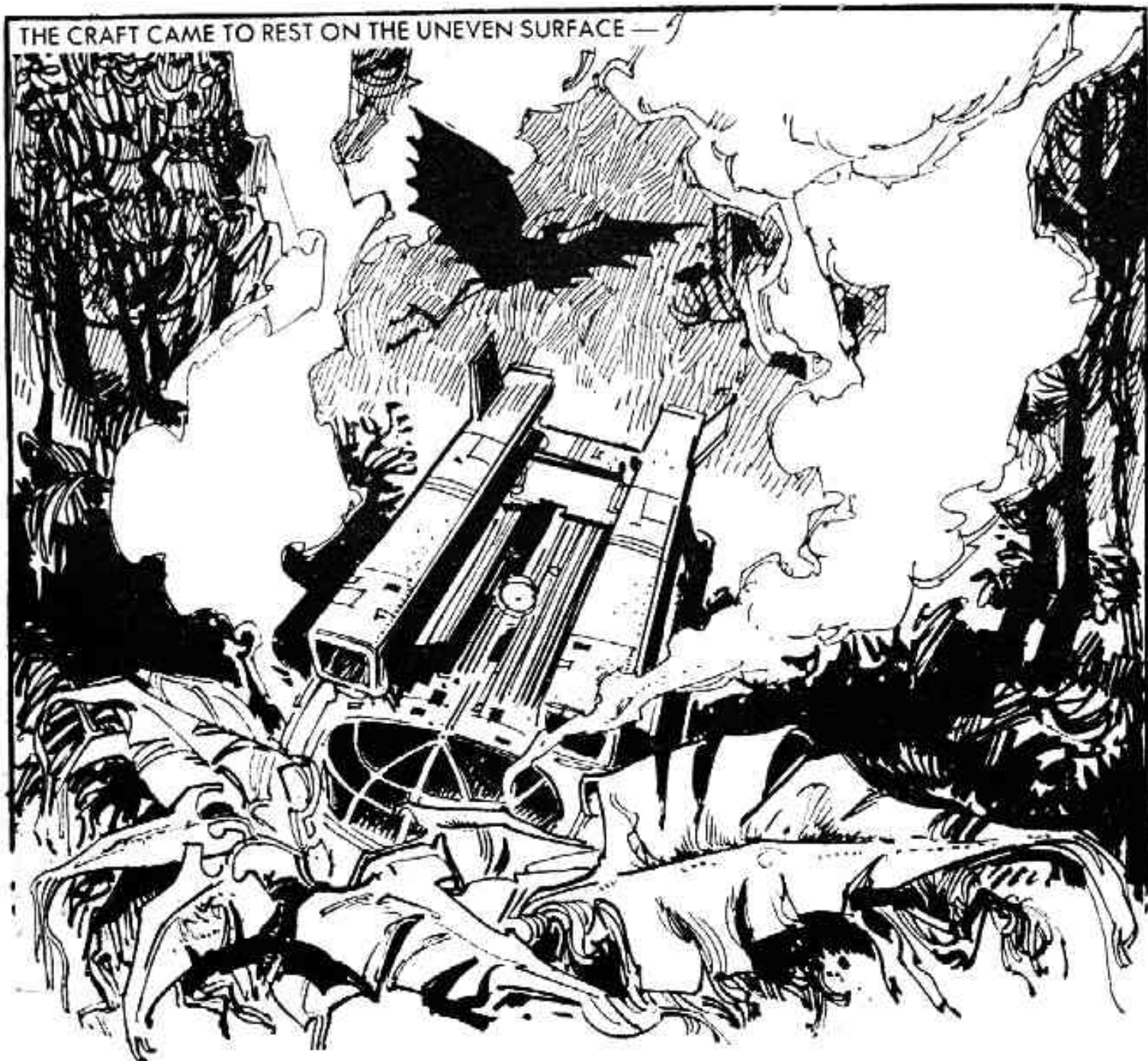
THE CRAFT ENTERED THE ATMOSPHERE —

A CRASH-LANDING'S OUR BEST HOPE.
WE'VE LESS THAN FOUR MINUTES
POWER LEFT.

THE PLANET'S GRAVITY DREW THEM DOWN —

RETRO BRAKES FIRED!
WE'RE TOUCHING DOWN ...

THE CRAFT CAME TO REST ON THE UNEVEN SURFACE — 7



ALL INSTRUMENTS DEAD — NO
COMPUTER RESPONSE. IT'S
ANYONE'S GUESS WHAT'S
OUTSIDE ...



THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.
I'M GETTING USED TO RISKS ...

STRANGE LIFEFORMS FLOATED PAST —

IT COULD BE WORSE. THERE'S
LIFE — OF A SORT.

WEIRD INSECTS AND A GIANT SWAMP, HARDLY
ADVANCED CIVILISATION ...

BUT UNSEEN EYES WATCHED —



STAY CLOSE — THERE COULD
BE LARGER CREATURES . . .

HARDLY REASSURING, PROFESSOR.
I WAS NERVOUS ALREADY . . .

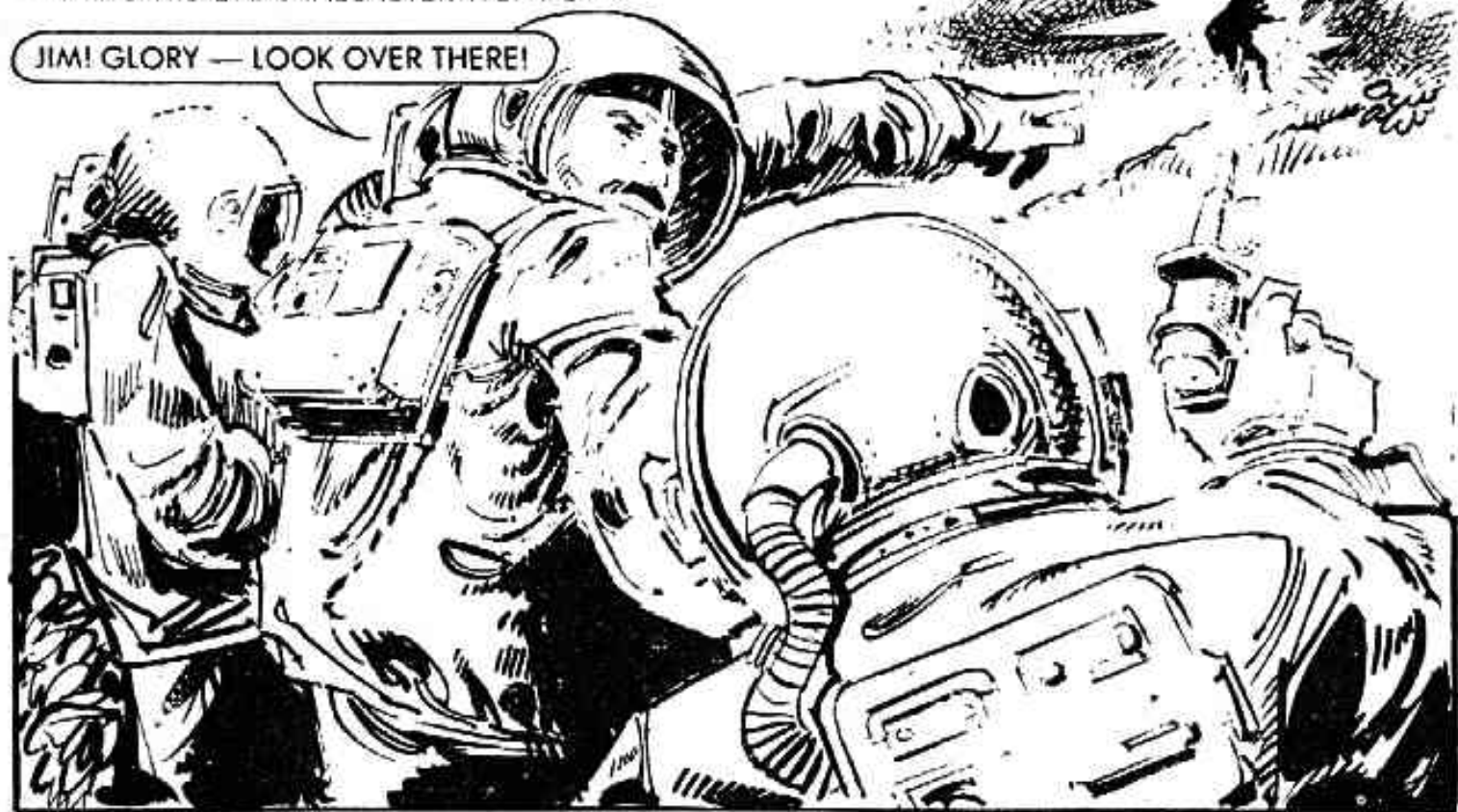
HIGHLY PROBABLE, I'D SAY. JUST
THINK OF THE VARIETY ON EARTH.

UHH!

JIM TRIPPED . . .

... AND HIS GAMMABLASTER WENT OFF.

JIM! GLORY — LOOK OVER THERE!

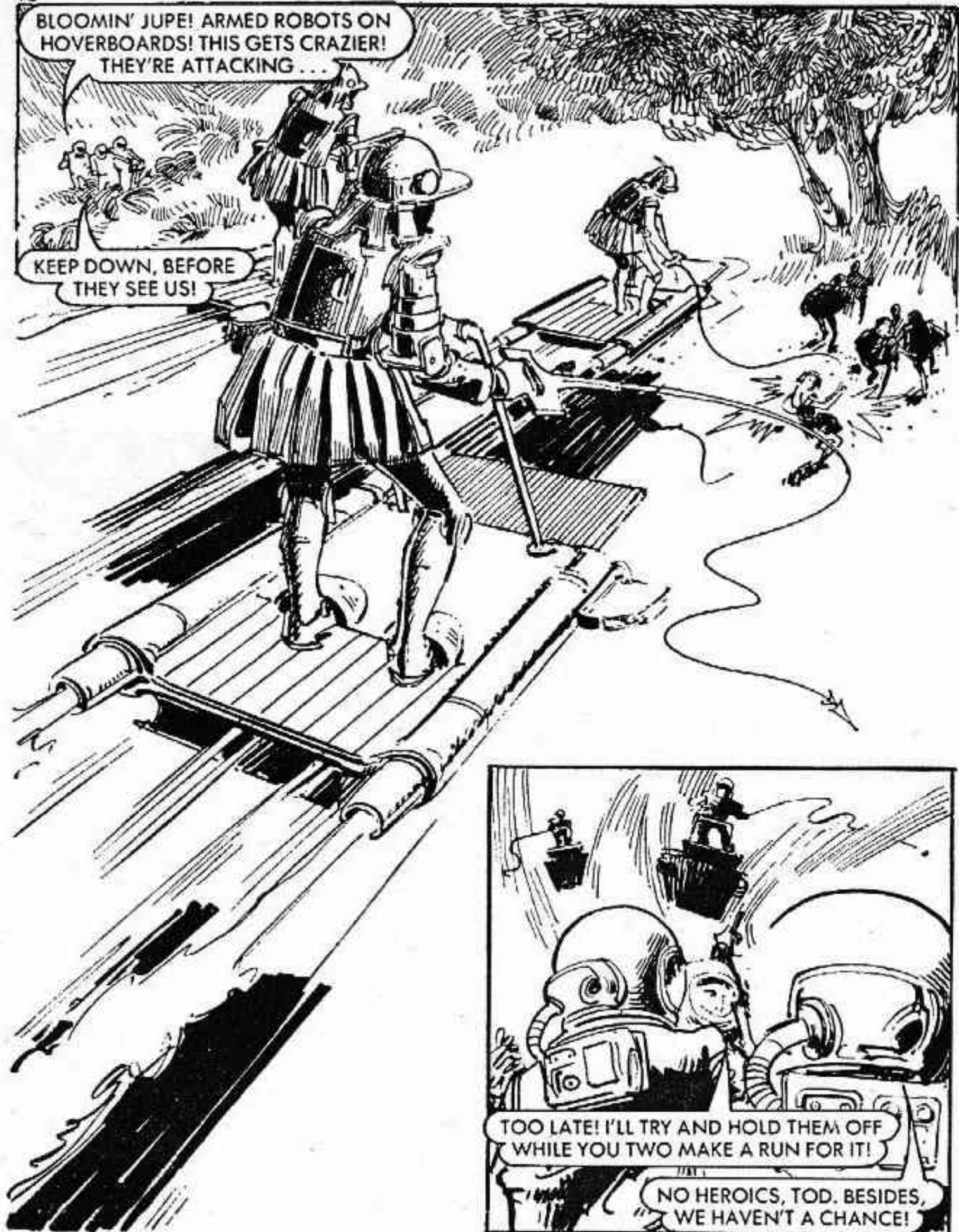






BLOOMIN' JUPE! ARMED ROBOTS ON
HOVERBOARDS! THIS GETS CRAZIER!
THEY'RE ATTACKING ...

KEEP DOWN, BEFORE
THEY SEE US!



TOO LATE! I'LL TRY AND HOLD THEM OFF
WHILE YOU TWO MAKE A RUN FOR IT!

NO HEROICS, TOD. BESIDES,
WE HAVEN'T A CHANCE!





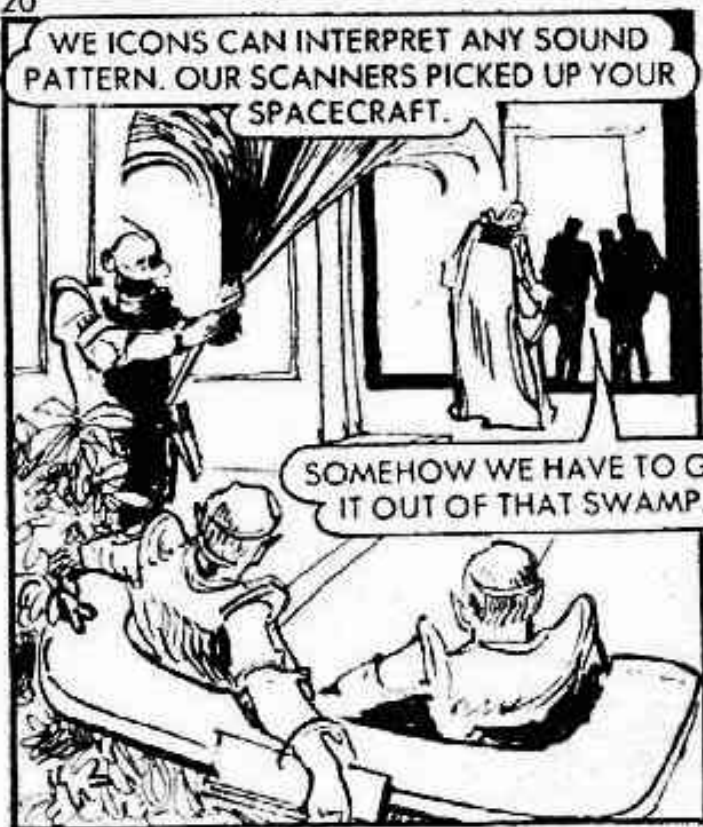
THEIR JOURNEY ENDED AMONGST ELEGANT GRECIAN-LIKE BUILDINGS —



WELCOME, STRANGERS. YOU WILL
RECEIVE EVERY COMFORT. I AM ANGOR.



WE ICONS CAN INTERPRET ANY SOUND PATTERN. OUR SCANNERS PICKED UP YOUR SPACECRAFT.

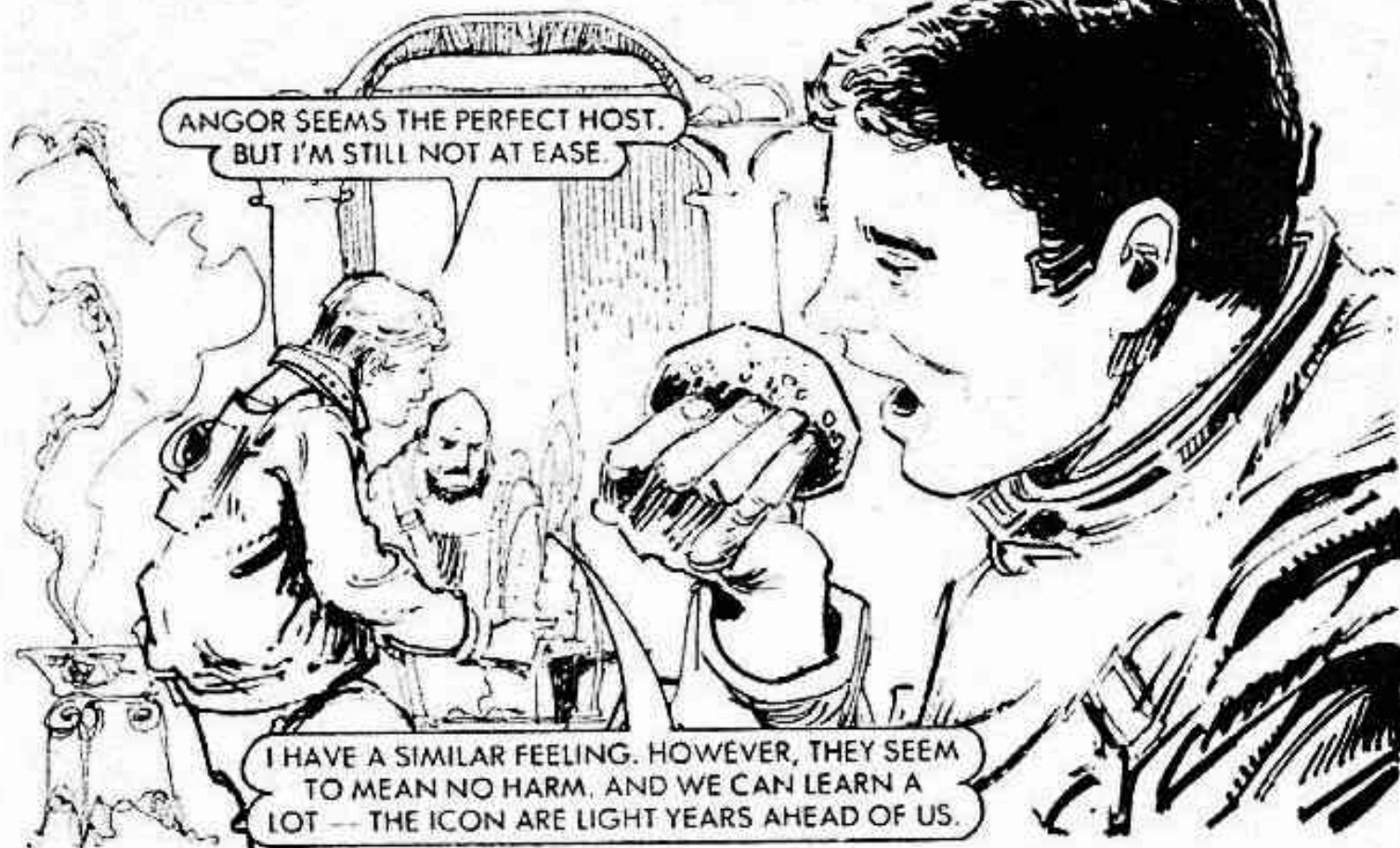


SOMEHOW WE HAVE TO GET IT OUT OF THAT SWAMP.

FIRST REFRESH YOURSELVES. YOU WILL NOT NEED YOUR WEAPONS! THOSE OF OUR BRAKAT SERVANTS ARE SUFFICIENT.



ANGOR SEEMS THE PERFECT HOST. BUT I'M STILL NOT AT EASE.

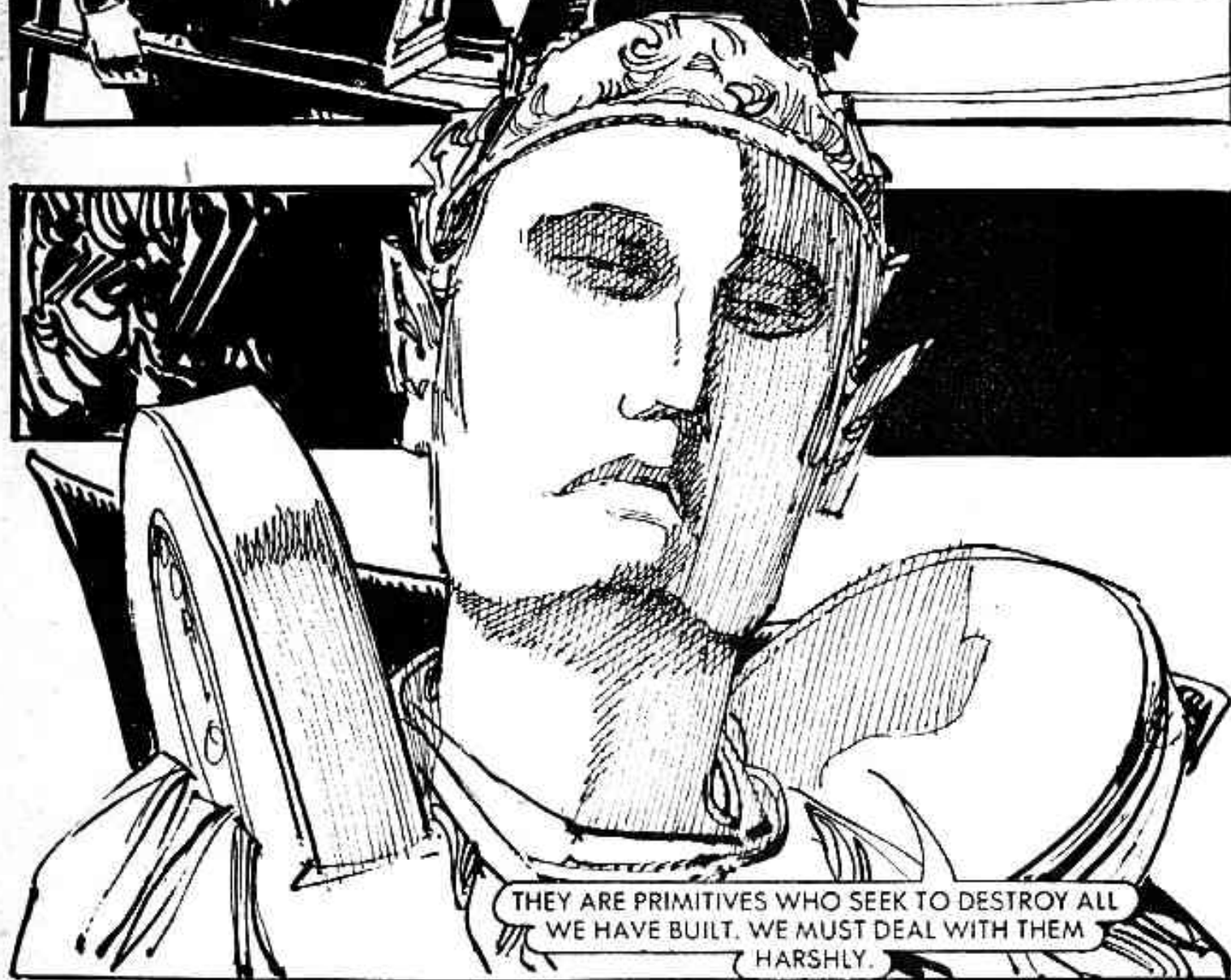


I HAVE A SIMILAR FEELING. HOWEVER, THEY SEEM TO MEAN NO HARM, AND WE CAN LEARN A LOT — THE ICON ARE LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF US.

LATER...

AS YOU SEE, WE ICONS ARE A PEACEFUL
RACE. BRAKATS DO ALL WORK...

BUT WHAT OF THE SWAMP
PEOPLE, ANGOR?



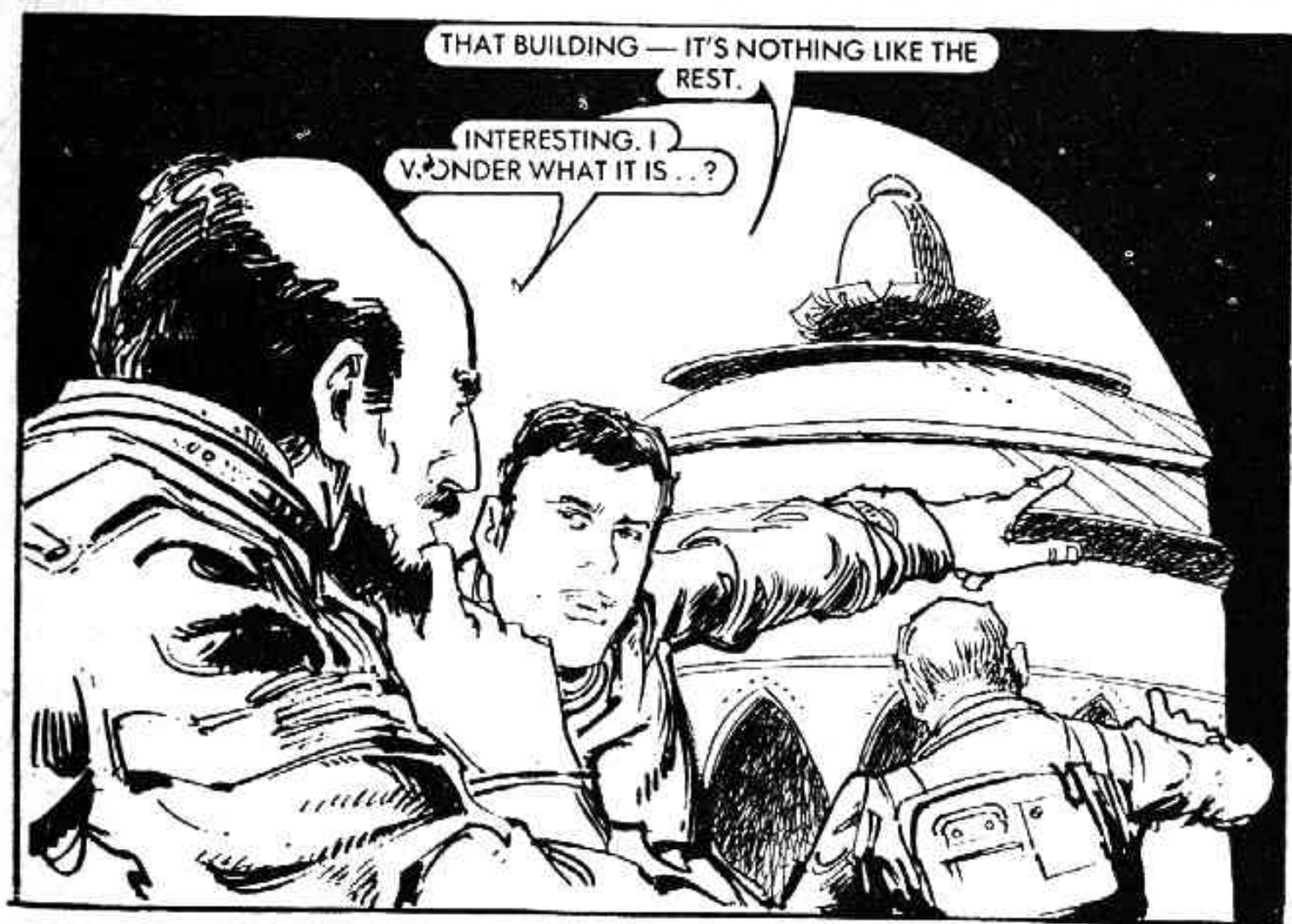
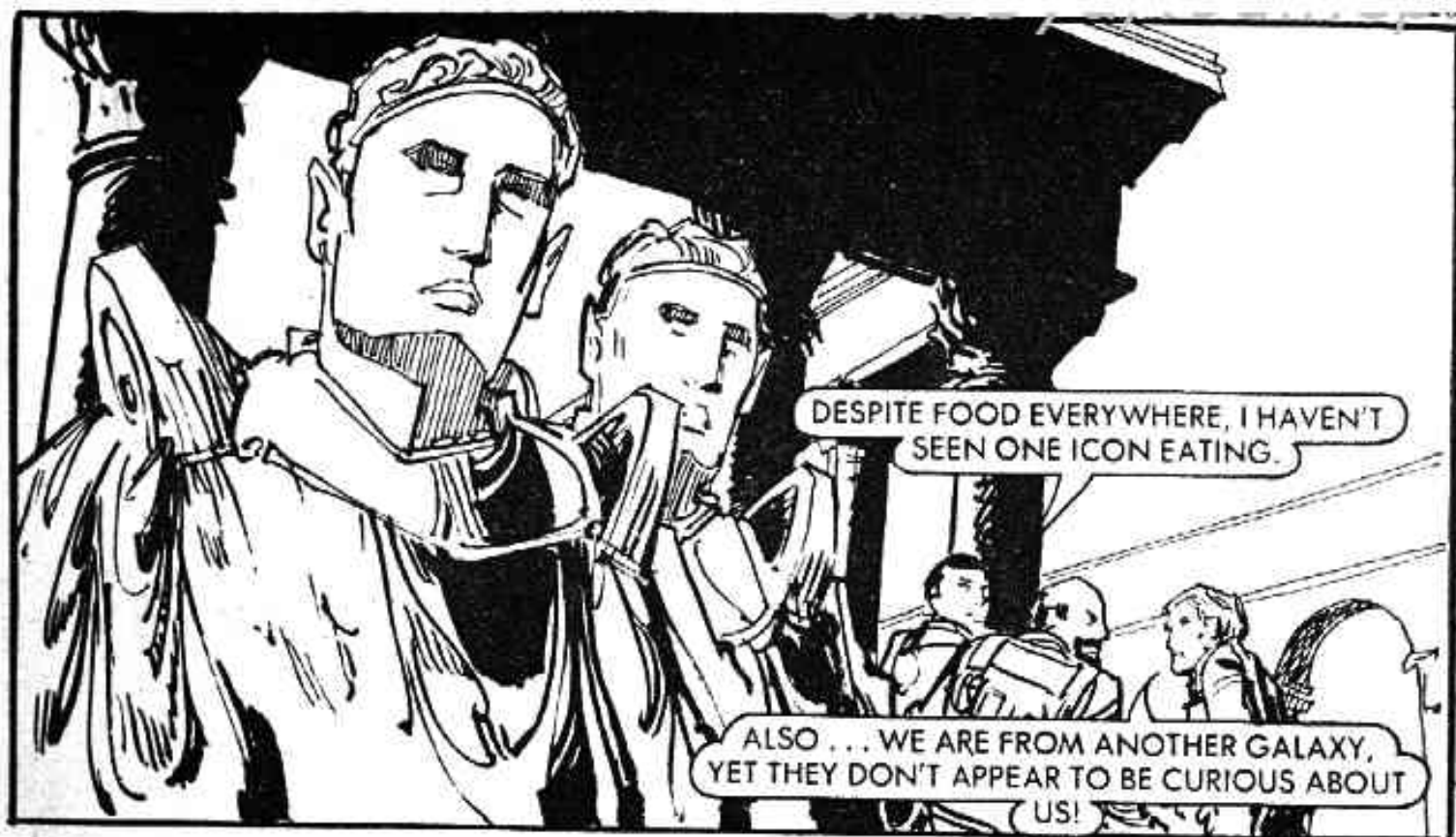
THEY ARE PRIMITIVES WHO SEEK TO DESTROY ALL
WE HAVE BUILT. WE MUST DEAL WITH THEM
HARSHLY.



WELL, PROFESSOR? IT APPEARS THE ICONS
AREN'T ABOVE VIOLENCE — EVEN THOUGH
BRAKATS DO IT FOR THEM.

THERE'S SOMETHING
ELSE, TOO ...







BUT ...



NO ONE MAY ENTER EXCEPT OUR ICON MASTERS
... YOU ARE FORBIDDEN.

YOU MADE YOUR POINT, FRIEND.
NO NEED TO BE SO TOUCHY ...



GO — THE COUNCIL IS NOW READY FOR YOU!

YET ANOTHER MYSTERY ... WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?



AT THE TEMPLE OF THE ICON COUNCIL —

WE ARE FROM EARTH. THE THIRD PLANET IN THE MILKY WAY'S BIGGEST SYSTEM. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ASSISTANCE TO RETURN.

WE KNOW NOTHING OF YOUR PLANET. EVERYTHING YOU REQUIRE IS HERE — ON PORTAN.





BUT A BRAKAT GUARD STOPPED TOD SHORT —



THE THREE EARTHMEN WERE TAKEN TO THEIR QUARTERS.

THANKS FOR THE ESCORT. I GUESS WE WON'T
BE GOING OUT AGAIN FOR A WHILE.

PRISONERS IN A LUXURY CELL! BUT
A CELL NEVERTHELESS!



AT LEAST THERE AREN'T BARS, JUST
BRAKATS GUARDING ALL THE EXITS.

NOT QUITE.
GIVE ME A HAND ...









FOLLOW ME! JUST PRAY THOSE BRAKATS
DON'T FIND MY HELMET TOO QUICKLY.

THEY HEADED FOR THE FORBIDDEN BUILDING —



WE'RE GOING VISITING.
I WANT A CLOSER LOOK IN THERE.

YOU'RE CRAZY! WE SHOULD HEAD
STRAIGHT FOR THE SWAMP.



THERE MUST BE A GOOD REASON FOR THIS
BUILDING BEING OFF LIMITS! IT COULD TELL US
MORE ABOUT THE ICONS...

BUT AS JIM TOUCHED THE DOOR —



BACK AT THEIR QUARTERS —

THE PRISONERS TRICKED US!
THEY HAVE ESCAPED!











THE WELL AIMED STONE WAS ENOUGH TO
PUT THE BRAKAT OFF BALANCE —

THE HOVERBOARD CRASHED TO THE GROUND —



I'LL TAKE THIS!







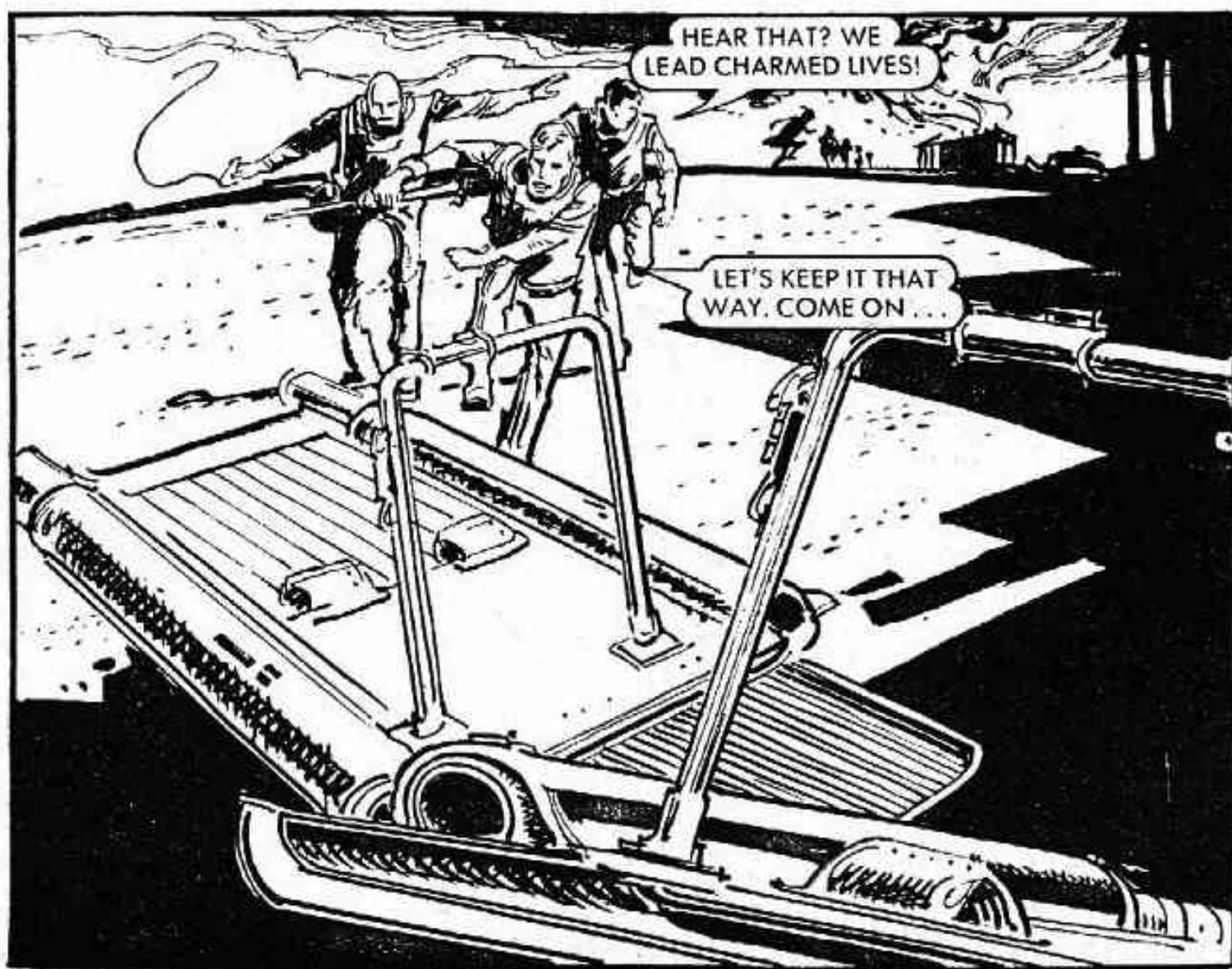


HERE COME THE BRAKATS . . .



A SMALL ARMY OF THEM. ONLY
A MIRACLE CAN SAVE US NOW.







THEY TOOK OFF —



ON THE EDGE OF THE CITY . . .

UUUAH! YANA! YANA!

NIKA — TANI!



MEANWHILE . . .

THE TEMPLE IS SAFE, MASTER.
BUT THE EARTHINGS HAVE FLED . . .

YOU SAY THEY
ATTACKED AN ICON?







IN THE SWAMP —





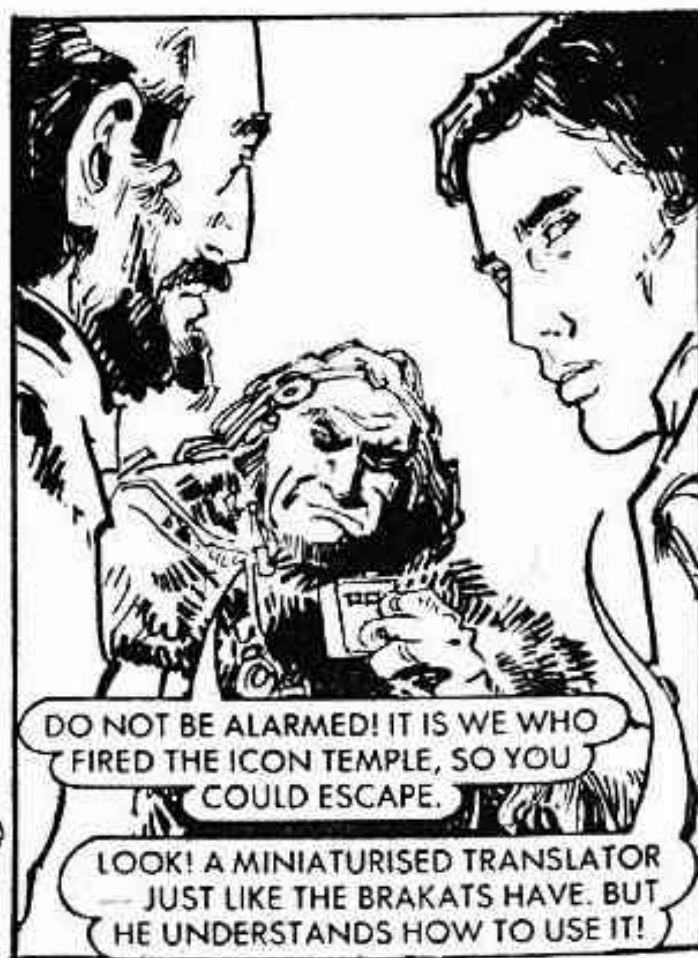
HERE GOES ... UHH! TOO FAST! WHAT ...?

TOD'S HIT SOMETHING! LET'S GET DOWN THERE, PROFESSOR!



I'LL DO MY BEST. HOLD ON ... NNNNGH!

CAREFUL, PROFESSOR ... NNNNGH!





BY FIRST LIGHT ...



YOU OPPOSE THE ICONS, SO DO WE! YOU BRING
NEW KNOWLEDGE FROM BEYOND PORTAN. PERHAPS
TOGETHER WE CAN DEFEAT THEM.

WE DISCOVERED THE ICONS'
SECRET. WHO BUILT THEM?

WE DID! A SALUTORY TALE OF
COMPLACENCY. LONG AGO, THE
ICONS WERE OUR ROBOT SERVANTS.





WE, THE VALKIS, ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF PORTAN CONSTRUCTED ANDROIDS TO ASSIST IN OUR BUILDING PROGRAMME, BUT WE BUILT THEM TOO WELL. CIRCUITS DESIGNED TO GIVE THEM ARTISITC APPRECIATION GAVE THEM THE ABILITY TO THINK AND HATE. WE WERE A PEACEFUL RACE, AND WERE HELPLESS WHEN OUR SUPER-ROBOTS ATTACKED...



THE NEW MASTERS OF PORTAN, THE ICONS BUILT THEIR OWN CULTURE, AND EVEN FORGOT THEY WERE NOT FLESH AND BLOOD. WE BECAME THE SLAVES.







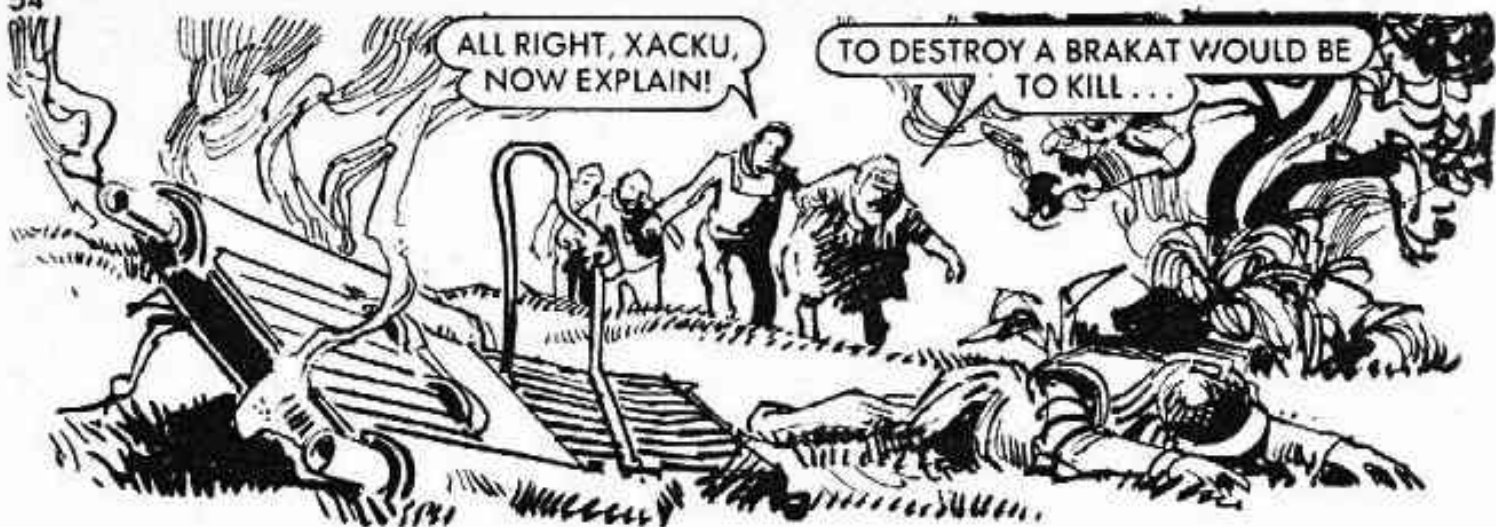


AS THE HOVERBOARD PULLED OUT OF THE DIVE, A VALKIS WARRIOR THREW A SPEAR —



ALL RIGHT, XACKU,
NOW EXPLAIN!

TO DESTROY A BRAKAT WOULD BE
TO KILL...



ONE OF US! THE ICONS TOOK
MOST OF MY PEOPLE AND
TURNED THEM INTO LIVING
ROBOTS!



BRAKAT IS OUR WORD FOR MINDLESS ONE.
WE ARE THE FEW WHO ESCAPED SUCH A
FATE.



THE HELMET CONTAINS A
NEVRO-SUPPRESSOR AND
VARIOUS ANODES THAT SEND
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE
WEARER.

THE DAZED AND BEWILDERED BRAKAT WAS HELPED TO HIS FEET —




HE SAYS HE REMEMBERS NOTHING.
IF WE COULD ONLY FREE THE
OTHERS ...

XACKU! XACKU!



XACKU FOUND THE CRASHED CRAFT —



YOU'RE THE ELECTRONICS EXPERT, PROFESSOR. CAN YOU MAKE WHAT I NEED?

WE'VE THE EQUIPMENT ABOARD!
WHAT I DON'T HAVE IS TIME.

BUT THE PROFESSOR MANAGED —

THERE! AN ELECTRONICALLY-CHARGED GAMMA
EXPLOSIVE, IN SIMPLE TERMS, A TIME-BOMB ...

IT'LL HAVE TO WORK.

4

AS THEY CREPT ACROSS THE DARKENED COUNTRYSIDE —



OBLITERATE! LET
NONE SURVIVE!



WHILE THE OTHERS KEPT THE BRAKATS ORGANISED, JIM AND THE PROFESSOR HEADED FOR THE FORBIDDEN BUILDING—

THERE'S THE BUILDING PROFESSOR. IT JUST HAS TO BE THE ICON'S NERVE CENTRE.

IT MAKES SENSE—SORT OF WHERE THEY RECHARGE THEIR BATTERIES. THEY HAVE TO BE BUILT AND REPAIRED SOMEWHERE.

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE WRONG. THE FORCE FIELD SHOULD ACTIVATE IF I TAKE A STEP CLOSER.

THAT GAMMA PISTOL YOU BROUGHT FROM THE SHIP WON'T NEUTRALISE IT...

NO, BUT IF I SET IT TO ELECTRO-FIRE
IT MIGHT JUST PUNCH A HOLE IN IT.

... USING ONE POWER SUPPLY TO
WEAKEN ANOTHER. IT'S POSSIBLE ...



IT BETTER BE, PROFESSOR.
HERE GOES ...!

THAT BLINDING LIGHT ...
INCALCUABLE ENERGY BURNING UP!



TOD WAS DETERMINED TO HOLD OUT —

WE CAN'T WIN, XACKU, BUT I'D
RATHER DIE FIGHTING!

THE VALKIS, TOO!
NO SURRENDER!

JIM AND THE PROF WERE IN TROUBLE —

THIS PLACE IS AN ICON
FACTORY!

THE TIME-BOMB'S SET.
WE'VE ONE MINUTE ...

THEY JUST MANAGED TO GET CLEAR —



YOU CUT IT CLOSE, PROFESSOR.

ICONS! THEY'RE STILL STANDING.
THEN . . . THEN WE'VE GUESSED WRONG!

NOT QUITE, PROFESSOR.





THE BRAKATS WERE ALSO AFFECTED —

THE BRAKATS ... THEY
ARE LIFELESS ...



NOT LONG AFTERWARDS—

THEN BY DESTROYING THE ICONS,
THE BRAKATS LOST ALL POWER.

THEIR EVERY MOVE WAS ON ICON ORDERS
RELAYED THROUGH THE HELMET
CONTROLS. WITHOUT THEIR MASTERS, THE
BRAKATS CEASED TO OPERATE.

WE WILL REBUILD THE VALKI CIVILISATION
ON PORTAN. BUT NEVER AGAIN WILL WE
ALLOW ROBOTS TO TAKE US OVER!

TALKING OF REBUILDING, WE'VE OUR
SPACE CRAFT TO THINK OF. THAT IS, IF WE
EVER WANT TO SEE EARTH AGAIN.

LONG, HARD DAYS SAW THE CRAFT IN
OPERATIONAL ORDER —

EVERYTHING'S FULLY OPERATIONAL—
INCLUDING THE COMPUTER PILOT...

FAREWELLS WERE SAID, AND THE TERRAN CRAFT PULLED FOR SPACE —



**DON'T
MISS**

**THIS MONTH'S OTHER
ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 129

IF THE WARLORD
WASN'T STOPPED IN
HIS MAD RAMPAGE
ACROSS THE GALAXY,
THE EARTH WOULD
BECOME

**The
Grave
Of Mankind**

NOW ON SALE

STARBLAZER'S

GUIDE TO THE SPACEMEN 42-44



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The three cosmonauts who crewed Soyuz 7 were Lieutenant Colonel Anatoli V. Filipchenko right, Vladislav Nikolayevich Volkov centre and Lieutenant Colonel Viktor Vasilyevich Gorbatko. This mission, lasting 4 days 22 hrs. 41 mins. began on October 12, 1969. Volkov flew the 23 day 18 hr. 22 min. Soyuz 11 mission on June 6, 1971, but tragically, a malfunction on re-entry ended in his death. Filipchenko flew Soyuz 16 on December 2, 1974 for 5 days 22 hrs. 24 mins. Gorbatko flew Soyuz 24 for 17 days 16 hrs. 8 min. starting on February 7, 1977 and Soyuz 37 which was launched on July 23, 1980 and flew for 7 days 20 hrs. 42 mins.